

This bill was serious about crime prevention and putting police officers on the streets, the 1994 bill.

It was more serious than in H.R. 728, because what it did was it prepared smaller cities and towns and counties for keeping the police officers.

Mr. Speaker, I served on the National League of Cities board. We had all kinds of cities, 17,000 of them. The issue is, once we get them, how do you prepare so that we can continue to pay their salaries and pension? The bill that they have now our colleagues are supporting on the other side drops the money down and gives no preparation to these cities and towns on how to maintain these officers.

At least, under the program in 1994 you could hire the officers, there were creative ways, a basis upon which those jurisdictions would know how to keep them, even some creativity in using it in overtime.

So I am disappointed that we are not staying on the right path, if you will, that would take all these variables into consideration. I join you in pride of getting away from what party it is or whose President.

I am glad our President was at the forefront of this.

But to see what works for Houston, and I imagine across the country, in this direction it has worked and is working.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this 1-hour special order with my colleague from Massachusetts, and I commend him for bringing us together to speak on this important issue.

The COPS program as authorized in the Violent Crime Control Act of 1994, attempts to place 100,000 more cops on the street by the year 2000. The COPS program is broken down into three grant programs: Cops Fast, Cops Ahead, and Cops More. The crime bill's community policing hiring program provides \$8.8 billion in competitive grants for State and local law enforcement agencies to hire community policing officers and to implement community policing. Community policing is designed to complement traditional policing by forging effective, innovative crime prevention partnerships between law enforcement and the community.

These programs are already moving to make their marks on our communities. Just yesterday, President Clinton and Attorney General Reno announced \$434 million to help 6,600 law enforcement agencies hire 7,110 community police officers under the Cops Fast police hiring program. Of this, 349 Texas police departments will be allotted \$20,909,886 to fill 366 officer positions. Eighty police departments in the southern district of Texas will be allotted \$5,151,452 to fill 85 officer positions. Coupled with previous hiring grants, full awards under Cops Fast would bring the total number of new officers funded under President Clinton to 16,674 in communities across America. And under the Cops Ahead Program, Houston has been awarded \$9 million to fund positions for 123 new police officers. This amount will increase when applications for the Cops More Program receive consideration after the March deadline.

We cannot roll back these promises with the changes that are proposed in H.R. 728, the Law Enforcement Block Grant Act.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, President Bush certainly was a supporter of midnight basketball; so during that period of time it was not so much of a partisan issue.

I think if more people had the experience, those who served had the experience of watching a community, as I did, with 10, 12, 15 home invasions, rapes, robberies, home invasions over a very brief period of time, and watched the devastation that occasioned, and then watch a community-based prosecution program by the district attorney, Tom Riley, an effective district attorney, implemented in a community, and you watch home invasions dramatically decline, there is nothing more rewarding to a prosecutor, to a police officer, than to watch those home invasions develop the strategy that works and see them stop. There is nothing that could be more rewarding to any law enforcement professional but to see the results of professional law enforcement.

I cannot help but believe if more Members in this body, whether they be Democrat or Republican, had that experience and saw the devastation that crime causes firsthand when you are called to a home to see that devastation and to see the difference when you implement a community policing program that works, we would not be having this discussion here tonight.

I think we would all be better off, the country would be better off.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. STUPAK. The reason why we are here tonight is because probably on Monday we will have a very critical vote, and it is a vote not just which side is going to win or prevail but whether America wins in keeping police officers on the street, where we need them, to keep community policing viable and working throughout this great Nation.

It is not who wins the most votes at the end of that vote on Monday, whether Democrats carry the day or Republicans carry the day; we want this country to carry the day by being safe in our homes, having more police officers available to them, and a crime bill that the taxpayers, really, are paying for, and then not going back to what happened in 1968. The whole issue here and the reason why we have been here throughout this week is not to allow the current crime bill that is proceeding on this floor, to be debated again tomorrow and again on Monday, to take the money we have available for community policing with 17,000 police officers authorized and we have 83,000 more, and we found a way to pay for it by cutting Federal employees.

So it is paid for in the crime trust fund, not to devastate that program, not to replace it with a program that has block grant after block grant with no guidelines and all the waste we saw in 1968 and in the 1970's. Let us keep

the program alive. We need the American people to help us get the message to their Representatives, whoever he or she may be, whether Democrat or Republican. I hope they call them tonight, tomorrow, and over the weekend and tell them to keep the cops program where it does the most good, on the streets, in our communities, whether you are a town of 17,000 or you are the size of Detroit or Houston or Lowell, whatever it is, that you have police officers.

We have responded, the need is there. As the cops fast program proceeded, half of the towns in this great Nation under 150,000 applied for police officers and were helped out.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, we are here because we need the help of the American people to keep cops on the street and not allow it to be devastated by the proposal that our friends on the other side of the aisle will bring to this body either tomorrow or Monday morning—Monday is when I believe the vote will take place. I believe the vote will take place on Monday.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I echo my colleague's remarks because this is important. As a freshman Member, having arrived here 2 years ago, often-times I voted away from my party leadership. In looking at the vote tallies since we have been here, I see more party discipline than I do looking at issues. I hope Members on the other side of the aisle will vote the issue and not party leadership because that is the only way we are going to save this bill.

I want to thank my colleague from Texas, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, for her eloquent and competent work in the Committee on the Judiciary on this bill and also her input tonight and throughout the session. As I said earlier, she is clearly one of the shining stars of this new Congress, and I appreciate her involvement as well as that of my colleague from Michigan, Mr. STUPAK.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. FROST (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for after 2 p.m. on Thursday, February 9 and the balance of the week, on account of illness in the family.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. WATT of North Carolina) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. DELAUNO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. CLAYTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ENGEL for 5 minutes, today.